

U.S. Drops Fight on U.N. Back Dues

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., April 30—The Johnson Administration has given up its drive to force Russia and France to pay back dues for U.N. peace forces.

This major policy change represents a victory both for Communists and for conservatives who oppose enlarging U.N. peacekeeping functions paid for by compulsory dues.

The decision to change was made on the theory that reviving a weak but working U.N. Assembly is preferable to allowing a principle to keep

the organization paralyzed indefinitely. The United States is also relying on Soviet promises to pay a "substantial" amount into a voluntary fund to remove some \$108 million of red ink from U.N. ledgers.

U.S. Ambassador Charles W. Yost signaled the change in the 33-nation peacekeeping committee yesterday. He suggested omitting any reference to U.N. charter Article 19 in a compromise proposal. The article provides for suspending voting in the Assembly for nations owing more than two years dues. Russia and France

argue that it doesn't apply to special peacemaking assessments voted by the Assembly.

Yost didn't specify what amount the debtor nations would be expected to volunteer. It would cost Moscow \$21.7 million if Article 19 were enforced. This now appears unlikely.

This is a switch from the U.S. position last winter. Washington then said in effect "we don't care what they call it, as long as they pay enough money to wipe out the debt penalty."